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NOTES ON THE
BURDS OF ORMISTON, SCOTLAND
AND
PHILADELPHIA

By
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UNIVERSITY CLUB
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EDWARD BURD
by Rembrandt Peale

Courtesy of John F. Lewis, Jr.

NOTES ON THE BURDS OF ORMISTON, SCOTLAND AND PHILADELPHIA

BY HARROLD E. GILLINGHAM.

HAVING a fondness for hunting through what might be called "Shabby Shops", where almost everything from Indian arrow heads, china, stamps and ancient papers may be found, there was unearthed one day, in a box of old trash, a packet of papers addressed to James Burd of Pennsylvania by William Dewar "Writer to the Signet" of Edinburgh, Scotland,¹ which proved to be the settlement of the estate of his father, one Edward Burd of Ormiston. "Ormiston Hall", at one time the seat of the Marquis of Linlithgow, is situated in the district of Haddingtonshire, about twelve miles from Edinburgh.

The name of "Ormiston" was intriguing. Knowing one of the old houses in Fairmount Park was so named, the documents were purchased and presented to The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, where all such papers should be. A later visit to this same shop revealed a plan of Edward Burd's estate on the Schuylkill styled "Ormiston", which not only showed the entire acreage but had a coloured view of the house, all "Surveyed by John Hills, 1799".

It will be recalled that all histories of the houses in Fairmount Park attributed "Ormiston" to the one-time ownership of Joseph Galloway. These papers and the plan proved otherwise.

Edward Burd of Scotland died January 17, 1765 of an "Appoplectic disorder" possessed of the Ormiston estate with its gardens and two parks, consisting of about fifteen acres. In addition he owned tenement houses and stabling in the Grass-market of Edinburgh, which rented for £30 per annum. His wife, Jean Haliburton, daughter of George Haliburton, Lord Provost of Edinburgh, died during the Revolution.

Of the ten children of Edward and Jean Burd of "Ormiston", Scotland, only three survived: James who was then in Pennsylvania and two daughters, living with the mother.

¹ In Scotland "Writers to the Signet" was a society of Law Agents, corresponding to Solicitors in England.

Hence these papers (which had come from the office of a recently deceased Philadelphia attorney) had been sent to this country to advise Colonel James Burd of the condition of his father's Scottish estate.

JAMES BURD, third son of Edward of Ormiston, was born March 10, 1726, educated in Scotland, and after reaching his majority went to London where he stayed a year. A frugal Scotsman, endowed with a touch of humor and a bit of sentiment, he preserved the bill of Ann Hyatt, with whom he lodged for five weeks in London, showing he partook of 34 breakfasts, nine dinners and twelve suppers.² In 1747 James came to Philadelphia where he apparently was well received, and soon entered into the social life of the city. The next year his name appears on "A List of Subscribers for an Assembly under the direction of John Inglis, Linford Lardner, John Wallace and John Swift".³ Family tradition is responsible for the pretty story that at one of these festivities James Burd first met Sarah Shippen, the daughter of Edward Shippen, and their love affair progressed so rapidly they were married at Christ Church, May 14, 1748, when James was twenty-two and Sarah but eighteen years of age. It is responsible too for the statement that the portrait of Sarah (Shippen) Burd, now in possession of a descendant, was painted in the dress worn at their first meeting. Quite appropriately he was a founder and the first vice-president of The St. Andrew's Society of Philadelphia.⁴ His son, Major Edward and grandson, Edward Shippen Burd, were also members of this Society.

James Burd engaged in the mercantile business soon after his arrival in Philadelphia, as one reads in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 1104, for February 6, 1749/50, this advertisement: "Just imported from London, in the snow⁵ *Friendship*, Captain Walter Stirling and to be sold by JAMES BURD, at

² This bill is in The Historical Society's collection.

³ The Historical Society collection, Am. 3075, p. 3.

⁴ *Historical Catalogue of The St. Andrew's Society. With Biographical Sketches of Deceased Members, 1749-1907.*

⁵ A two-masted square rigged vessel somewhat like a brig, save that abaft the mainmast it has a spar, or mast, separate from, but attached to the mainmast, upon which is hoisted the spanker or driving sail. It is this separate or auxiliary mast which denotes a *snow*.

his store on Carpenter's wharff, opposite to William Coleman's the following goods''. Then follows a long itemization of dry-goods, men's and women's wearing apparel of all varieties, such as ozenbrigs, duffields, men's scarlet knit breeches, camblets, cambletees, calimancoes, hair grazets, nonesopretties, hardware and other merchandise. In July 1751, Burd went on a business venture to Jamaica, having goods to the amount of a thousand Pounds consigned to him, which evidently proved unsuccessful as he retired from the mercantile business soon after, owing Mr. Walter Sterling the sum of £1,000.⁶

The following letter from his Dancing Assembly friend John Swift is of interest:

Philadelphia, July 26, 1751

Mr. James Burd—

Dear Sir:

When you arrive in Jamaica please to dispose of my 36 Barrels of Flower, and if you have an opportunity Ship the net proceeds in heavy Pistoles to Mr. John White, of Croyden, in Surrey (near London) for my account. If there should be no opportunity to London, I then leave it to your discretion either to ship the Pistoles to me here, or to purchase any produce of the Island that you imagine will answer in this place. God bless you. My good wishes will always attend you wherever you go; because I am.

Your humble Servt

John Swift.⁷

Subsequently, he and his young family went to the then raw frontier of Pennsylvania and settled at Shippensburg on land owned by his father-in-law, who wrote on May 7, 1752:

Last Thursday after a very fatiguing Journey to Shippensburg I returned Home [Lancaster], but left Mr. Burd and Sally & ye 2 children in good health and well pleased with their Settlement and for Ten Pounds I got Possession of the whole Plantation. . . . I bought Some Sheep; and also five fine milch Cows and Calves So that they have great Plenty of milk and butter. I laid them in a fine parcel of laying hens.⁸

⁶ *Shippen Papers*, Vol. I, p. 119, Correspondence.

⁷ *James Patterson of Conestoga Manor and His Descendants*, compiled and edited by Edmund Hayes Bell and Mary Hall Colwell (Wickersham Press, 1925), p. 164.

⁸ *Shippen Papers*, Vol. I, p. 139.

On September 24, 1753, Edward Shippen wrote his "Dear Children" as follows:

If I should build a Mill or Mills at Shippensburg I shall consent to let you have the management & benefit of it or them, till further orders or until I should live there, which may not be impossible, yet don't hint such a word for the world.

Farming and milling were not then for James Burd. Events of moment were crowding to be born. Public life was weaving its web for him. On March 12, 1755, Governor Robert Hunter Morris appointed him one of the five Commissioners "to survey and lay out such roads as they judge most direct and commodious for the use of General Braddock, the Commander in Chief of his Majesty's Forces in North America,"⁹ for that ill-fated expedition to Fort Pitt.¹⁰ The following December James Burd was commissioned Captain of a Company of Foot and ordered to build and command a fort at Kishicoquillas and named Fort Granville,¹¹ and on April 24, 1756, under commission as Major of the Third Battalion, or Augusta Regiment, he marched with his troops to Fort Augusta, now Sunbury, Pennsylvania, and took up his duties as resident commandant of the post. His services there were commented on by Joseph Shippen, Jr., in a letter of May 15 of that year to Edward Shippen, Sr. as follows:

Mr. Burd's conduct has been so good here as to have gained the affection of the Governor, Collonel, and Captain Loyd, and they often speak greatly in his praise, as an Industrious, active useful clever Fellow,¹²

Secretary Richard Peters wrote on April 7, 1757, to James Burd:

. . . The particular Attachment I have to your Person and Family will lead me to serve you, inform you, correspond with you, and promote your Interest, Ease, and Satisfaction all I can . . . at present you stand well with

⁹ *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, Vol. VI, p. 318.

¹⁰ See letter from Burd to Robert Hunter Morris, Lieutenant Governor of the Province, dated Shippensburg, July 25, 1755, giving detailed account of the disaster and partial list of the casualties. *Ibid.*, pp. 449, *et seq.*

¹¹ *Shippen Papers*, Correspondence, Vol. II, p. 21.

¹² *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 55.

Governor, . . . I wish you every thing your heart can desire. God bless you.¹³

In another letter he wrote reassuringly:

You give great satisfaction to the Governor and every one else

and on the following November 18th he again wrote:

I am ashamed that the Governor has not given you Leave of Absence. The length of time and severity of your Duty make it also of late necessary . . . This shall be my endeavor to obtain for you.¹⁴

On January 2, 1758, Colonel Conrad Weiser resigned and James Burd was appointed Lieutenant Colonel of the Second Battalion of Pennsylvania Regiment in his place. The victory over the French and Indians at Loyal Hanna on October 12th of that year, is regarded as the turning point in the war.¹⁵ Colonel Burd's command included a considerable stretch of territory, the chain of forts from the Susquehanna to the Delaware¹⁶ as well as Fort Augusta. Colonel Bouquet was unfortunately miles away from the scene of battle on the night of October 12th. In a letter to Burd dated Stony Creek, October 12, 1758, Bouquet explains the episode:

I diferred answering your Several Letters, in Expectation of joining you every day. The Rains, broken Roads, and Several other contingent causes, have kept me back. To-morrow I hope to dine wth you but don't retard your dinner for me. . . . We cut quite a new Road from this Post to the top of the Laurel Hill, which will be 4 miles shorter and 8 miles better. . . . I hope the General's Hutt is ready as he will soon be wth us. He mends *a Pace*.¹⁷

Bouquet did not dine with Burd "tomorrow", for on the 16th he again wrote from Stony Creek to Col. Burd, at "Loyal Hannon":

I received yesterday morning your last of the 14th, and transmitted to the General all the Intelligence you sent me . . . Col. Washington will be here this day wth the rest

¹³ *Shippen Papers*, Vol. II, p. 153.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 91.

¹⁵ *Frontier Forts of Pennsylvania*, 1896, Vol. II, pp. 220-226.

¹⁶ *Journal of James Burd*, relative to official visitation of Forts, *Pennsylvania Archives*, Vol. III, pp. 352, *et seq.*

¹⁷ *Shippen Papers*, Vol. III, p. 209.

of his Regt. The new Road will be cut in 3 days (if good weather) to the top of the Laurel . . . The General grows better and better, he has fired a *feu de Joye* for your affair. I have forwarded all your Letters. As soon as I can I shall be with you.

I am, Dear Sir, your most obedt and hble Servt

Henry Bouquet.¹⁸

Colonel Burd not only received the thanks of Governor Thomas Penn for his efficiency in the service of the colony, but was the recipient of many letters and favours from the Commander in Chief of the British Army in North America, General Robert Monckton. In a letter of July 25th Edward Shippen of Lancaster thus felicitates his son-in-law:

Last night I had the pleasure to receive your very agreeable favour of the 15th instant, which is the only one that is come to my hands since you left Carlisle, but Sally received a letter last week, and you may be sure it gives us joy to hear of the regards paid you by the general in appointing you an Assistant Deputy Quarter Master General, &c.

In accordance with the Treaty at Lancaster in 1762, Burd was appointed one of the Commissioners to receive such prisoners as should be brought to Fort Pitt, and the following year was likewise a Commissioner and Justice of the Peace to treat with Connecticut to prevent further settlement of its people at Wyoming, on the lands of the Six Nations. He continued to command at Fort Augusta until peace once more returned to the frontiers.

On December 9, 1766 Edward Shippen wrote from Lancaster to the Rev. Richard Peters as follows:

. . . My Son in Law bought at Vendue last Summer 500 Acres of Patented Land which belonged to Clinton's Estate, fronting the River Sasquehannah for £900. with a new Saw Mill on it, but the Stream of water not very Constant. On which Mr. Burd can make 30 Acres of Choice Meadowing; and there is a very good Loghouse, and a large Log Barn 50 by 30 feet 2 storys high, the latter must have cost the Owner Sixty pounds at least; but Some say he had a great bargain of it, being a Choice Plantation, lying 26 miles off [From Lancaster], & but 2 miles from Middletown . . .¹⁹

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, III, p. 217.

¹⁹ *Captain Richard Peters' Papers*, The Historical Society Collection.

This land was in Paxtang Township, then Lancaster County, now Dauphin, some two miles from Middletown, where, in 1767, James Burd built the substantial house, which he called "Tinian", and moved his family thereto the following year.

On May 9, 1766, Edward Shippen wrote from Lancaster to "Mr. Grojean" ordering lumber and timbers for this house, "Tinian", to be rafted down the Susquehanna and landed at the riverside. The cellar beams and all the joists of the house were to be of white oak, as well as the roof rafters and shingling lath. Thirty pieces of "heart pine" 6 x 6 inches, were ordered for the doors and window frames,²⁰ for at that period there were no machine-made door or window frames. All such were made on the spot by the local carpenters.

Under Commissions of 1764 and 1770 James Burd was Justice of the Peace and of the Courts of Lancaster County; Chairman of the county Committee for the relief of the Boston sufferers in 1774, and in May 1775, was elected to the Lancaster County Committee of Safety, to be commissioned Colonel in the Pennsylvania troops the following July. Active in raising troops to aid the cause of Independence, he was nevertheless disturbed by "the dissention in his Battalion and the reluctance on the part of his men to serve anywhere except in their own immediate neighborhood." In consequence thereof he tendered his resignation in December, 1776.²¹ He continued to live at "Tinian", where he died on October 5, 1793.

Side lights indicative of James Burd's understanding friendliness toward the Indians; firm discipline at Fort Augusta, and his general ability to meet emergencies, are to be gathered from his excellent Journal printed in the State Archives²² covering the period of the building of the Fort. In this, he gives an account of the Indian Councils at which he was addressed by the Chiefs of the Six Nations as "Brother Coroiago."²³ No doubt the salutation appealed to him and over it, as a signature, he writes his brother-in-law, Captain Joseph Shippen, on November 14, 1756, as follows:

²⁰ *Burd Papers*, Historical Society Collections.

²¹ Charles P. Keith, *Provincial Councillors*, p. 67.

²² *Pennsylvania Archives*, Vol. II, pp. 745-820.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 790, 791.

Lancaster 14th November 1756

Dear Jo.

This will be delivered you by Hyter the Wagoner by whom you'l send 50 or 60 wt. of Sugar (mean Clay'd Sugar) we proposed to carry to Fort Augusta [Sunbury], Dady Recommends to have it put up in a tight 8 or 10 Gallon Cagg. If you can meat with any good pickled oysters think it would not be Amiss to send up 5 or 6 Caggs if you think well of it we are well with our Love to you & Brother Ned & Sister²⁴ and children & I am with great Esteem

Your most affectionate Brother

CAROIAGA

Captn Arthur of whome you buy the Sugar will give you a little Caian [Cayenne] pepper & Sister Peggy will inform you where you can gett a bottle of flour of Mustard ut Supra.²⁵

C “

Burd's keen foresight in public affairs is set forth in a letter to his father-in-law, Edward Shippen, Sr., regarding the erection of Lebanon County out of Lancaster County. Not until 1813, was this fact accomplished.

Tinian 11th September 1773

Dear & Hond Sir.

It was with great pleasure I Recd your Favr of the 6th Inst- I observe what you say about the New County- I was some short time ago at Labanon to meet my son from Reading. the People there seemed all to be Cock sure of Succeeding, but I am of a Different opinion for the following Reasons- first it will greatly Effect Mr. Hamilton's Town of Lancaster- the Present Governor [John Penn] & part Propr is Nephew to Mr. Hamilton & no doubt Expects some part of his Estate- Add to this the Propria torys are possessed of no Land Round Labanon. There will be in Council to oppose it Mr Hamilton Prest- my Bro. E:S:²⁶ Mr Tilghman, Mr A:Allen. & to be sure the Secratary- should it pass the House of Assembly- which it will, if Messrs G:R. & his Bror E:B:²⁷ should Espouse the Matter it will find Obstruction in the Council & there Rest- there is not a single Man of Interest that pushes for a Division of the County that I know off, and it will Certainly meet

²⁴ Edward Shippen, Jr. and wife Margaret.

²⁵ *Balch-Shippen Papers*, Vol. I, p. 30, Historical Society Collections.

²⁶ Brother-in-law, Edward Shippen, Jr.

²⁷ George Ross and Edward Biddle, who married Elizabeth Ross.

with opposition in this part of the County & nothing will be wanting on my part to prevent it, And Indeed I Cannot see the least probability of their Carrying the Matter through. I make not the least doubt G:R: [George Ross] will finger a good many $\frac{1}{2}$ Johannes's upon the Occasion—the *Labanon* people will not spare Money to Affect their Scheme as many of them have built very fine Houses there in Certain Expectation of its being a County Town—tho I told them I thought they were a little premature. Mr. J:Ferree²⁸ was here sometime ago soliciting my little Interest to help him to succeed Stone on the Sheriffship—

I told him I would befriend him if he would Continue Hollingsworth as his Deputy & have one other Clever honest man as a sub Deputy that I like, he promised me he would Continue Hollingsworth & appoint Caleb Johnston as his Sub-Deputy upon which I told him I would serve him & therefore if you approve (as I think the Business will be well and punctually done) I would Solicit your Interest & our Familys Int: in fav. of Ferree, as he is a man of substance, I hope you will be better off with him than the Present Needy Man . . . ²⁹

James Burd died at "Tinian." His wife, Sarah, daughter of Edward Shippen³⁰ born in Philadelphia, also died at Tinian.

²⁸ John Ferree was Sheriff of Lancaster County, Oct. 6, 1773 to 1775, *Pennsylvania Archives*, 2nd series, Vol. IX, p. 769.

²⁹ *Balch-Shippen Papers*, Vol. II, p. 18, H. S. P. Collections.

³⁰ Edward Shippen, son of Joseph and Abigail (Gross) Shippen, generally known as Edward Shippen of Lancaster, was born in Boston, July 9, 1703; died at Lancaster, 25 September, 1781. He was brought up as merchant by James Logan, later becoming a junior partner in his business ventures. In 1749, he formed with Thomas Lawrence, the partnership of Shippen & Lawrence and became active in fur trading. He established the town of Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, then on the wild frontiers of the colony, and was one of the founders and first Trustees of the College of New Jersey, later Princeton University, serving on the Board twenty years. In 1732 he was elected to the Philadelphia City Council and twelve years later was elected Mayor of the City. In 1752 he moved to Lancaster where he became Prothonotary of the Court, serving in that office until 1778. During his entire career he was active in public affairs and a highly respected member of the community wherein he lived.—*The Shippen Papers*, also *Pennsylvania Archives*, 2nd Series, Vol. IX, p. 773.

He married (1) at Philadelphia, September 20, 1725, Sarah Plumley, daughter of Charles and Rose (Budd) Plumley; (2) in August, 1747, Mary, daughter of William and Mary Gray of Philadelphia, widow of

In the cemetery at near-by Middletown, Pennsylvania, is a flat stone with the simple inscription:

Col. James Burd | Born at Ormiston | Scotland | March 10th, 1726 |
Died at Tinian | Oct. 5th, 1793 | Aged 67 years 6 | months | and 25 days.

Beside it is a similar stone on which is inscribed:

Sarah Burd | Born February | 22d, 1731 | Died in Tinian | Sept. 17,
1784 | Aged 53 years | 6 months | and 25 days.

Although Colonel and Mrs. Burd had a large family there are now [1939] but three descendants bearing their surname: Ralph F. Burd of Buffalo, New York and his daughter, Margaret Shippen Burd, and Miss May A. Burd of Sunbury, Pennsylvania. A scholarly article by the latter, *The Life of Colonel James Burd*, in *The Northumberland County Historical Society Proceedings* for 1931, contains as an illustration, a pencil drawing of Tinian by the author. Erected prior to the Bouquet expedition of 1763, it is the second oldest edifice within the limit of Dauphin County.

Children of James and Sarah (Shippen) Burd:

- i. SARAH BURD, b. January 1, 1748/9; married Jasper Yeates, Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, 1791-1817, and compiler of *Yeates Reports*. Had issue, born in Lancaster.³¹
3. ii. EDWARD BURD, b. 5 February, 1750/1; married his cousin, Elizabeth Shippen.
- iii. MARY SHIPPEN BURD, b. Shippensburg, 15 January, 1753; died at Hopewell Forge, February 23, 1774; married Peter Grubb of Lancaster, prominent iron master of Lancaster County; Colonel in Revolutionary Army. Had Issue.³²
- iv. ALLEN BURD, b. Shippensburg, 23 December, 1754; died, Lancaster, July 10, 1764.

John Nowland. She died at Lancaster, May 3, 1778. No issue by second marriage.

Children of Edward and Sarah (Plumley) Shippen:

- i. ELIZABETH SHIPPEN, born August 17, 1726; died young.
- ii. JOSEPH and WILLIAM SHIPPEN, twins, born September 6, 1727;
- iii. died young.
- iv. EDWARD SHIPPEN, Jr., born February 16, 1728/9; died at Philadelphia, April 16, 1806; m. November 29, 1753, Margaret, daughter of Tench Francis, Attorney General of the Province.—Keith's *Provincial Councillors*, p. 59.
- v. SARAH SHIPPEN, m. James Burd. *q. v.*
- vi. JOSEPH SHIPPEN, b. Philadelphia, October 30, 1732; died at Lancaster, February 10, 1810; m. Jane, only child of John Galloway. Was Lieutenant Colonel during the French and Indian War, later Secretary of the Provincial Council, 1762-1772. Had issue.—*Ibid.*, p. 79.
- vii. ROSE SHIPPEN, b. September 10, 1734; d. young.

³¹ Charles P. Keith, *Provincial Councillors*, p. 68.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 72.

- v. JANE BURD, b. August 12, 1757; died "Harmony Grove," Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, 1819; married George Patterson, Esq., August 8, 1783. He died at Chestnut Hill, October 31, 1814. Had ten children, all born on the Juniata.³³
- vi. ANNE BURD, b. Lancaster, September 3, 1759; died young.
- vii. MARGARET BURD, born February 2, 1761; married, November 3, 1786, Jacob Hubley. Had nine children.³⁴
- viii. ELIZABETH BURD, b. Lancaster, 1762; d. 1763.
- ix. JAMES BURD, born at Lancaster, January 4, 1765; married Elizabeth Baker. Had three children.³⁵
- x. JOSEPH BURD, born Middletown, January 8, 1768; married (1) Catherine Cochrane, (2) Harriet Bailey.³⁶
- xi. ELIZABETH BURD, born at Tinian, 1772.

3. EDWARD³ BURD (*Colonel James*,² *Edward*¹ of Scotland), born in Philadelphia, February 5, 1750/1, died there July 24, 1833.

He was educated in Philadelphia and like others of his period took a course at "Mr. Fooke's French School", where he spent nine months.³⁷ The following letter to his sister Mrs. Jasper Yeates, is rather remarkable for a boy then but fifteen years of age:

Philadelphia March 7, 1765

Dear Sister

Our holding an epistolary Correspondence with each other (in my opinion) would be of great utility to us both. It would purify our style & fit us for writing to any of our Acquaintance. Our greatest objection is that the worthless Politician Mr. B. Franklin has obstructed our Correspondence by his ten penny Cuts. But nevertheless I hope that we can contrive to get a letter from each other once a month. Your complying with this my humour will very much oblige Dr- Sister

Your most affectionate & loving Brother

Edward Burd.

P. S. I have a prodigious task
& you'll excuse my writing.

Endorsed on the back thereof, in Jaspar Yeates handwriting is "No. 3 Philada. March 7, 1765 Brother Neddy."³⁸

³³ Keith, p. 73, etc.; *James Patterson of Conestoga Manor and His Descendants*, pp. 186-7.

³⁴ Keith, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-7.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

³⁷ *The Burd Papers*.

³⁸ Yeates Mss., The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

During his life his grandfather Edward Shippen Sr. exerted a strong influence over Edward Burd and more of his letters are preserved addressed to Edward Shippen Sr. than to his father James Burd. One of these during his minority shows the character of his economical Americanism. It is dated September 20, 1769, and acknowledges the receipt of a box of home-made cloth: "I shall be very proud of wearing a Coat which was spun (sic) in our family & for that reason think I had better wear it while ye Revenue Act remains unrepealed." As a further indication of the grandfather's watchfulness over Edward, reference is here made to a letter he wrote his son Joseph Shippen, on October 15, 1770:

I advise you both [Joseph and his brother Edward Jr.] to keep up your handwriting and it is to your credit that you take my counsel in this, as well as in everything else. I have thought several times to write to your brother to oblige Neddy Burd to preserve his writing too; he writes so bad sometimes that when I open his Letters, and cast my eyes towards the middle part of them, I think they come from Judge Lawrence, who is the poorest Penman I ever saw. I have wrote two or three times about it, but to no purpose; he always pretends hurry of business.³⁹

This "hurry of business" is exemplified in Edward's letter to his sister, previously quoted, where he said "I have a prodigious task & you'll excuse my writing".

That gayety entered into Edward Burd's life is shown by his letter to Jasper Yeates of March 21, 1770:—

I have been this Winter, at two Balls at the Lodge and one Dance, and had the pleasure of dancing with three very amiable young Ladies... All the Belles are to spend the Evening at Uncle's, and tell me if I offer to Intrude they will pummel me (with their delicate hands) most unmercifully— if they should kill me, I shall die a Death of Pleasure, but I apprehend more Danger from their Eyes, than any other Weapon they can use.⁴⁰

Whether his cousin, Elizabeth Shippen, was one of the "three very amiable young Ladies" of his letter is not revealed. He survived, however, and continued his study of the Law in his uncle Edward Shippen Jr's. office, who was later Chief Justice of Pennsylvania, and on December 21, 1771, wrote to grandfather Shippen, then at Lancaster:

³⁹ *The Shippen Papers.*

⁴⁰ *Burd Papers.*

I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you at Lancaster next February Court; when Uncle thinks I shall get admitted; as also at the next Reading Court; If therefore you should please to send down the Horse you kindly intend to let me have the Use of, so as I may have him to ride up to next Court, I shall be obliged to you.⁴¹

He was duly admitted to practice and in May of 1772, was appointed King's Attorney at Reading, where he boarded at Mr. Whitehead's and rented an office near the Court House from Mr. Lightfoot, at a rental of £5 per annum. From there he wrote that "Berks County is almost entirely inhabited by Germans and [I] shall therefore attend particularly to the learning of that language." On July 3, 1774, he wrote Jasper Yeates from Reading: "We have had a Meeting here on the present state of American Affairs, and entered into a Number of patriotic Resolves which you will soon see in the Papers". On the next day a letter to his grandfather followed:

It certainly ought not to be esteemed Rebellion to detest and exclaim against the Measures of a bad Minister, the End and Design of which are to reduce us to a state of Slavery. . . . The Parliament of Great Britain claim and have endeavoured to enforce the Right of taxing America, She [America] denies that such a Right exists and is determined to oppose ye Execution of it to Blood. . . . She, Great Britain may destroy our Trade, she may batter down our Cities. She may murder a great number of Americans, but they are numerous, a brave People and will spill a great quantity of English Blood before they can reduce to an abject Submission to the tyrannical Will of a Minister . . . In my opinion the ablest Men of America ought to be sent to a general Congress, and by their wisdom to form an American Bill of Rights; what that should be is a Matter of the greatest Difficulty to determine . . . Better to run the Risque of No Existence than to exist in Slavery.

In July of 1775, Edward Burd went to Cambridge, Massachusetts, with Colonel, later General William Thompson and his riflemen. Not as one of them, but as a volunteer, which is explained by his sister Sarah's letter of July 18th to Jasper Yeates:

Lancaster Tuesday 12 o'clock night.

Dear Mr. Yeates

This Evening my dear Brother came to Town to take his leave of us all for God knows how long a time or

⁴¹ *Burd Papers.*

perhaps for Ever. Oh how can I endure the thought. . . . He [Edward Burd] does not want to be so recommended as to accept of any office but to perform his duty as a Soldier whenever Occasion requires. The reason he gives for not accepting a Commission is that when the Battle is over he can return to his Business without more loss of time than a few months . . .

Sarah Yeates.⁴²

The campaign at Cambridge finished Burd returned to Reading to continue his law practice, keeping in close touch with the political situation, and, as a continuation of the war seemed inevitable, he joined the Reading Company of militia, and was appointed First Lieutenant, writing his father on March 15th, 1776:

For my own part I am against Independence, if we can possibly be reconciled upon terms consistent with our safety – but if these Commissioners only offer pardon, or will not treat with the Congress and secure us our essential Rights, I do not know at present what would be my determination in such a case.

And on July 6th he wrote Grandfather Shippen:

I expect to be fixed on as a Major to proceed with the Militia Battallion of this county for the defense of the middle Colonies. If that should be the case, I think it my duty not to refuse.

Wavering as he was on the point of the Oath, Burd showed himself truly interested in the cause of the Colonies, as the same day he wrote to his father:

If I am chosen, I am determined on going, as I have no notion of any man's refusing his service when his country calls on him. As this is a sudden emergency, I do not think I can see you before I go.

This occurred soon after he had bought a house and lot in Reading for his future home. Toward the end of July he went to Philadelphia and later to Trenton, where he joined his troops, writing from "At a Town within 4 miles of Berwick" . . . "We shall be stationed at Amboy, at my own request in order to be under the immediate direction of General Mercer". On the 30th of July he wrote Edward Shippen Sr.: "We are within a short distance of the Enemy

⁴² Gratz Collection, box 28, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

but they are not very troublesome to us. I am very kindly received by General Mercer, and am just going to dine with him." His next letter of interest, is to Jasper Yeates, dated from Long Island, September 3, 1776, wherein he states: "I was taken prisoner at an advanced Post on the morning of the 27th Ulto after a skirmish... I was used with great Civility by General Grant and admitted to my parole."...

On December 12th, he wrote his father from Philadelphia telling him happier news:

I am at last so fortunate as to be exchanged, though it happened not by intention, but accident. General Washington sent about ten or twelve prisoners to New York and intended to name the persons who were to be sent in exchange; but Gen. Howe took the first Major, Captains, Lieutenants, &c. who happened to be on his list of prisoners, and sent them in exchange. I happened to be the first Major and was therefore so lucky as to be returned. General Washington was surprised to see me. However he was so polite as to tell me, that from the character I bore he was satisfied with my being the person, though he did not like the mode.

Major Burd apparently soon went to Tinian, his father's home on the Susquehanna where he remained until May of 1778, as he wrote various letters dated from there, and it is most unlikely that he ever visited Philadelphia during the British occupation of the city, as one writer has stated. A letter from him to Jasper Yeates is indicative of the trouble some were having in securing good clothing during the war. He writes "Those silk waistcoats I got at Lancaster are the most rotten things I ever saw". In the same letter he speaks of "my fair one" and said: "She is all that my Imagination can paint, lovely, of 'that youthful poets fancy when in love' ", showing his continued affection for cousin Elizabeth Shippen. During this enforced idleness he was clearing land on "Elizabeth Island" where he had contemplated building a home, but in August 1778, he is at Reading advising grandfather Shippen of his contemplated appointment as Prothonotary of the State Supreme Court, which was carried out some months later. This was almost as a wedding present, as Edward Burd and his first cousin Elizabeth, daughter of Edward Shippen, Jr. were married at Christ Church Philadelphia, on December 17, 1778, and soon rented a furnished house from Mrs. Francis, at the South West corner of Fourth

and Walnut streets, he paying the house-rent and agreeing to replace wood, flour and other articles consumed by his household during the tenancy.⁴³

He continued as Prothonotary of the Supreme Court until 1805, when he resigned, and lived in Philadelphia until his death on July 24, 1833, aged eighty-four years. During the Yellow Fever of 1793 he removed his family to the country to avoid contagion. In the meantime, he had bought the former Joseph Galloway property from Joseph Reed, "A messuage or Tenement and Plantation" of about 45 acres, on the banks of the Schuylkill, for "Twelve hundred pounds lawful money of Pennsylvania", where, in 1798, he built a summer home, described in a letter to his sister, Mrs. Yeates: "I have built myself a good house at Schuylkill, which I expect to raise in a few days, and call it Ormiston after ye name of our grandfather's Seat near Edinburgh". Thus confirming the former statement that "Ormiston Mansion" in Fairmount Park was never on the property when Joseph Galloway owned the land.⁴⁴

Children of Edward and Elizabeth (Shippen) Burd:

4. EDWARD SHIPPEN BURD, born December 25, 1779.

MARGARET BURD, born August 20, 1781; died *d. s. p.*, May 19, 1845.

Married January 9, 1800, Daniel W. Coxe of Philadelphia.

ELIZABETH BURD, born December 11, 1782; died October 6, 1786.

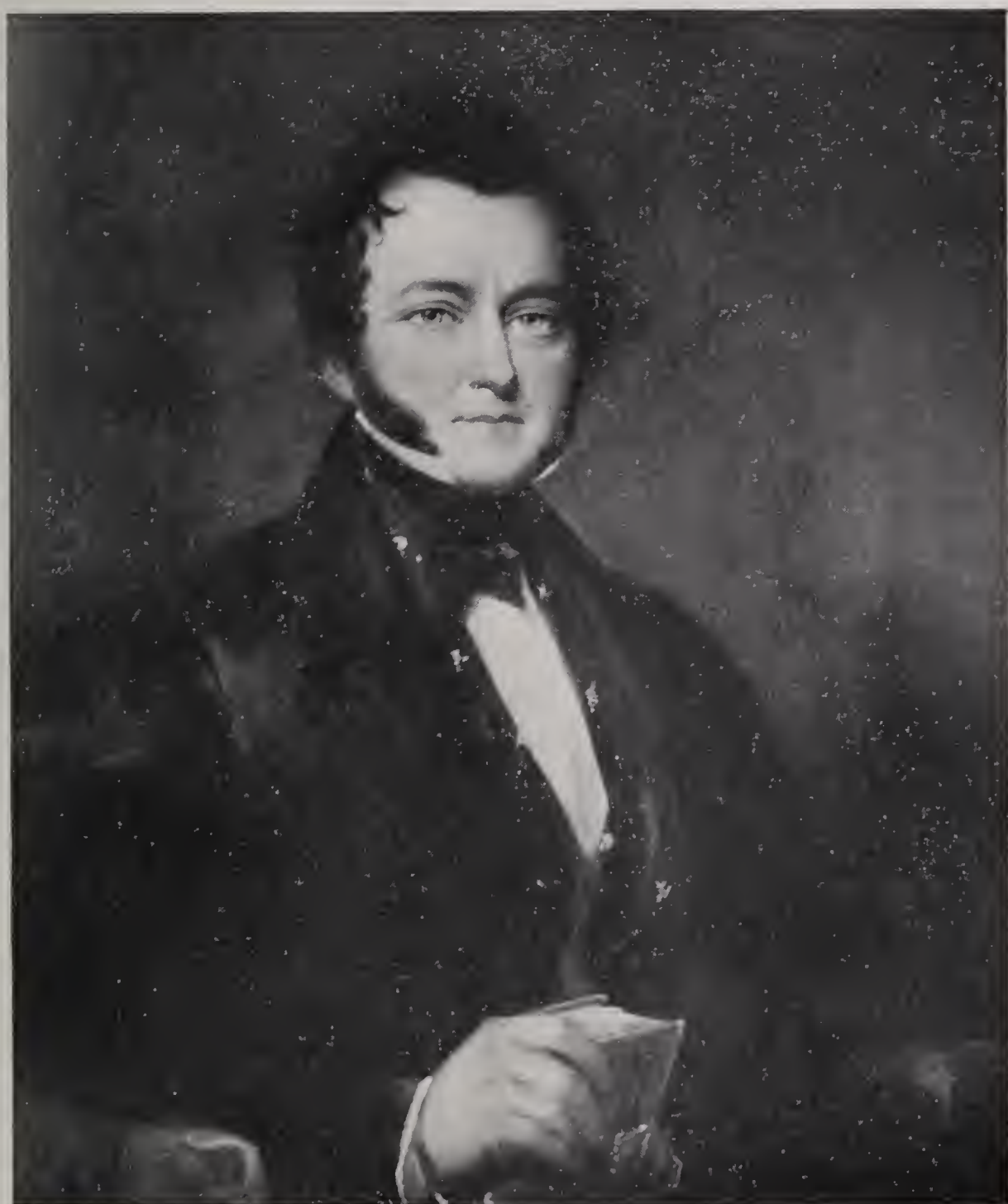
SARAH BURD, born April 8, 1786; died unmarried June 11, 1855.

4. EDWARD⁴ SHIPPEN BURD (*Edward³, Colonel James², Edward¹ of Scotland*), was born on Christmas Day, 1779, at his parent's home, then No. 88 South Fourth Street, below Walnut. He received his education in Philadelphia and at the University of Pennsylvania, later taking up the study of Law, but developing a specialty for investing in local real estate.

Soon after his marriage he moved into a house he had built at the southwest corner of Ninth and Chestnut Streets, on a lot 101 feet on Chestnut Street, extending back to George, now Sansom Street, where he had a stable, a small house, and a large garden in the centre. At this period the "Burd Mansion", which was handsomely furnished, was considered

⁴³ *An Old Philadelphia Land Title*, by John Frederick Lewis; also *Burd Papers*, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁴⁴ *Burd Papers*; also *The Real Estate Magazine*, Philadelphia, June, 1937.



EDWARD SHIPPEN BURD

Courtesy of John F. Lewis, Jr.

a show place of the city and here Mr. and Mrs. Burd entertained sumptuously.

In 1813-1815 Philadelphia was scantily developed west of Tenth street, and Edward Burd did not confine himself alone to central city property, as his tax receipt books, in The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, show that he had large holdings in Southwark, Passyunk, Moyamensing, the Northern Liberties, as well as 60 acres in Blockley. These sections had not at that period been incorporated into the City of Philadelphia. The Blockley Township property was located on the south side of Chestnut street extending from the Schuylkill river to Darby Road. A further large tract, known as the "Botanic Gardens", was situate at what used to be called "Brewery Town", in the vicinity of 33rd and Thompson streets, extending to Columbia Avenue, and bisected by the old Columbia railroad, now part of the Reading Company's system.

His central city holdings of real estate included the S. W. corner of Eighth and Chestnut street; his mansion at the same corner of Ninth street, and the S. E. corner of Twelfth and Chestnut extending back to Sansom street. When he sold this lot in 1828 he restricted that any buildings built thereon should stand back at least six feet from the then legal line of Chestnut street. Thus, over a century ago Burd realized the necessity of a wider Chestnut street. With John H. Brinton he owned the S. E. corner of Broad and Chestnut; 125 feet on the latter and extending through to Sansom street, and most of the property on both sides of Sansom between Juniper and Broad streets. Other holdings were the South West corner of Fifteenth and Chestnut streets, where the Colonnade Hotel formerly stood, now occupied by the Franklin Trust Building, and the South East corner of Sixteenth and Chestnut streets, through to Sansom street.

As pasture lots and brick yards were located west of 17th street at that period, Burd evidently had in mind Bishop Berkeley's statement—"Westward the course of empire takes its way" and visualized the future growth of the Quaker City, for he bought almost the entire block on the south side of Chestnut between 18th and 19th streets, back to Sansom street, which cost him \$300. per front foot. Here again he provided, in his will of 1848, that the land should be restricted, so that any buildings built thereon should stand back six feet from

the legal line. Evidence of that is still visible in those buildings nearest Eighteenth street. Nor did he confine his purchases only to Chestnut street properties. Walnut, Spruce and Pine street likewise appealed to him. At one time he owned more than three quarters of the block from Broad to Fifteenth and from Locust to Spruce street, all save the Academy of Music lot. On his plan of this property, now in The Historical Society collections, he noted his lowest selling price for the Spruce frontage was \$44,000. The block bounded by Thirteenth, Spruce, Locust and Juniper streets was also his. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania now own and occupy part of this land.

According to his tax bills he owned the property where the Philadelphia Club at 13th and Walnut streets now stands, and much of the Walnut and Juniper streets frontages. He owned too, most of the old Vauxhall Gardens; East side of Broad between Walnut and Sansom streets, where the old Dundas-Lippincott mansion formerly stood, and now occupied by The Fidelity-Philadelphia Trust Building. On May 29, 1833, Charles Fletcher wrote to Burd enquiring his price for the Vauxhall-Gardens property, as "There is a plan before the public for building a large Hotel on the front of Vauxhall lot in Broad street."⁴⁵ In the writer's collection is a prospectus "For Building a Splendid Hotel, to be called PENNSBORO HALL" on the site. One of the inducements was, that as the "largest and most beautiful City of the Union, and the pride of the world" . . . "is yet very deficient in her houses of entertainment", it was proposed to build there a large hotel with 96 private bedrooms and parlours, with two large dining rooms and a ball-room as well as stores on Walnut and Sansom streets. And as Fletcher stated in his letter of inquiry as to price "Since the Baltimore Railroad is likely to be completed the passengers from that city will come into Broad Street in the winter season and the stores will accumulate rapidly in the neighbourhood of the Hotel". Alas! such was never the case. Philadelphians built to the westward, and our fine Broad street has been turned over to the cheapest of businesses, save between Spruce and Arch streets.

⁴⁵ The old Continental Hotel at 9th & Chestnut streets was not built and opened for guests until 1860.



MRS. EDWARD SHIPPEN BURD

Courtesy of John F. Lewis, Jr.

A full list of the properties owned by Edward Shippen Burd, would require a space disproportionate for this article. Those who are interested are therefore referred to his tax bills, receipt books, plans and other records in The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, many of which were purchased by the writer from the aforementioned "shabby-shop" and presented for preservation. It may, however, be of local concern that he owned many small houses between Eighth and Twelfth, Locust and Spruce streets, on such delightfully named thoroughfares as Quince street, Currant, Plum, Apricot, Raspberry and Blackberry Alleys, Prosperous Alley, Eagle Court, Burd's Court and Ormiston Alley, the latter no doubt, so named from his father's estate in Fairmount Park.

A lover of music and the fine arts,⁴⁶ Edward Shippen Burd was interested in and connected with many of the city's institutions. One of his interests being the "Association of the Philadelphia Arcade Company", which had purchased the Chief Justice Tilghman property on the north side of Chestnut between Sixth and Seventh streets, extending to Carpenter's Street, now Ranstead, where the Arcade was built in 1826.

On August 20, 1810, Edward Shippen Burd married Eliza Howard Sims, daughter of Wooddrop and Sarah (Hopkins) Sims, with every prospect of a happy life together; but tragedy seems to have followed them in the rearing of their eight children. In 1811 their first child, Edward, was born, but he died in infancy. Next year another son, likewise named Edward, was born, only to die a short time after birth. James, born 1814, likewise died in infancy, and in 1816 a daughter, Elizabeth, was given them. Margaret followed in 1819. Another son, again to be named Edward, was born in 1820 and Wooddrop Sims Burd followed in 1822. The third Edward died when three years old. In 1827 the fourth Edward was born, who also died in infancy. Thus the parents were left with two daughters and a son Wooddrop, but while with their parents in Paris, Wooddrop died at their home in the Place Vendome, in 1837. Margaret died at the age of

⁴⁶ A letter in the writer's possession, dated March 12, 1833, to Madame Pedrotti—who was giving a Benefit musical concert the next day—indicates his having taken and paid for Box No. 1 at the theatre, as well as presenting her with \$50 in appreciation of her talents and to aid her and Signore Rapetti who accompanied her.

twenty-five and the remaining child, Elizabeth, died when the family were again in Europe, thus leaving the parents childless. The shock at losing all his children seems to have been too much for Edward Shippen Burd, as he too died, September 17, 1848.

During his early married life, Mr. Burd was a pew holder in St. James' Protestant Episcopal Church, then on Seventh above Arch Street. Later, his religious affiliation and that of his family was transferred to St. Stephen's Church, on Tenth Street above Chestnut, where he was a founder, liberal contributor and one of the Vestry until his death. Here, along the north wall, stands that beautiful white marble group of angels erected in memory of the eight deceased children, a perpetual message of parental faith in immortality.

By will Mr. Burd left the greater portion of his property to his wife. In addition to his then real estate holdings there was over \$288,000 in personal property, largely U. S. Government 6% and Philadelphia City 5 and 6% loans.

After his death his widow continued to live in the great mansion at Ninth and Chestnut Streets until her death, April 6, 1860. She at once became interested in Orphan female children and among the items found with her effects after her decease was the grocery account for supplies purchased for the houses which she maintained for fatherless girls on Sansom Street nearby. By her will she bequeathed most of her estate to the Rector, Church Wardens and Vestrymen of St. Stephen's Church of Philadelphia for the foundation, upkeep and endowment of "the Burd Orphan Asylum of St. Stephen's Church, in honour of my late beloved husband, Edward Shippen Burd." This was first established at Sixty-fourth and Market Streets but, owing to financial stringency, and incidentally to lack of students for the school, the property was sold and from its proceeds "Burd School" was installed at 4226 Baltimore Avenue, a living reminder of the once prominent Philadelphia branch, descendants of Edward Burd of Ormiston, Scotland. Portraits⁴⁷ of Major Edward Burd, his son, Edward Shippen Burd, and Mrs. Burd adorn the walls of the School.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ *An Old Philadelphia Land Title*, by John Frederick Lewis, Philadelphia, 1934, shows excellent reproduction illustrations.

⁴⁸ The writer wishes to acknowledge Mr. Charles B. Montgomery's assistance in allowing access to his notes on the Burd and Shippen families.

